

Doc. No. 1340

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TRANSLATION OF NUREMBERG DOCUMENT
OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSELPage 1
f Orig.)

Record

Tue/Mo. 13/14

of the conference between the "Fuehrer" and the Japanese Foreign Minister MATSUOKA in the presence of the German Foreign Minister as well as Ambassadors OTT and OSHIMA on 27 March 1941.

After a few words of welcome the Fuehrer inquired first how MATSUOKA had stood the long and tiring trip from Japan to Germany. MATSUOKA replied that the trip agreed with him very well especially since on his trip through Siberia he was entirely cut-off from the outside world and only from time to time got to see a small Siberian country paper in which practically no actual news was recorded. He therefore had felt as if on a vacation trip.

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f Orig.) After that the Fuehrer gave a survey of the general situation. (He said) The war was forced upon Germany. However, she had not been surprised by the war; because she had had the opportunity to follow up the campaign of incitement of certain British, French and American circles for years and therefore prepared herself for everything. In spite of these thorough preparations the outbreak of the war was however not a political aim. Germany had political demands, but hoped to be able to satisfy same by reason. In 1939 the procedure of a peaceful revision of impossible situations which had worked until then with success was interrupted through Poland's pushing forward and the resultant consequences.

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f Orig.) Considering the present situation soberly and without imagination one would have to state that at the outbreak of the war in 1939 there were on the opposite side 60 Polish, 6 Norwegian, 18 Dutch, 22 Belgian and 138 French divisions. In addition there were 12-13 British divisions on the continent. Now it was possible, in barely 1½ years, to eliminate 60 Polish divisions with the occupation of Poland, 6 Norwegian divisions with the occupation of Norway, 18 Dutch divisions with the occupation of Holland, and 22 Belgian divisions with the occupation of Belgium, and out of 138 French divisions only 8 weak brigades are still in existence. All British troops were dispersed and chased away. These are losses which cannot be replaced, and Britain's position cannot be saved any more. By this the war was decided, the Axis powers have become the controlling combination. Resistance to their will is impossible.

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f Orig.) As MATSUOKA knows, at the beginning of the war Germany was just on the point of building a navy. In spite of this fact any military operations in the course of which seaways had to be used, especially in Norway, were completed, and the British were not in a position to prevent these operations. The German submarines as well as the surface vessels (auxiliary cruisers and battle ships) together with the Luftwaffe caused the British tonnage losses amounting to almost 3/4 of British and Allied losses of World War I. For, at first, very few submarines were put into active service by Germany. By far the greatest number had been used to train new crews for the numerous units manufactured by mass production. The real submarine warfare would only begin in the present and next month. Britain would be weakened to a considerably greater extent than her present losses and would not be in a position to threaten German shores and means of communications anymore. Besides, Germany is tying up in increasing percentage of the British fleet in the North Sea and the Atlantic. The same is being done by the Italian fleet and the German Luftwaffe in the Mediterranean.

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f Orig.) Germany has absolute control of the air in spite of all British explanations about alleged successes. MATSUOKA would be able to check this statement while looking around in Berlin and comparing present Berlin with present London. Blows of the Luftwaffe would still be increased considerably in the next few months. Britain would suffer from increasingly heavy losses of ship space, and the effectiveness of the German blockade is being shown by the fact that rationing in Britain has to be much stricter than in Germany. The war, meanwhile, would be continued as preparation for the final blow against Britain.

The "Fuehrer" then discussed the situation in the Mediterranean and explained the Italy had been unfortunate in North Africa because she lacked the necessary antitank defense against the British Tank army. Now, however, the danger has been eliminated with the arrival of the first armored division in Tripolitania which will soon be followed by a second division. A further British advance is now out of question, to the contrary, the Axis will in a short time begin a counter-attack.

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f Orig.) The Italian undertaking in the Balkans was hindered by severe weather conditions. However, in the next few days all difficulties in this theater will be eliminated by a combined advance of Germany and Italy. There is no military problem because Germany has 240 divisions "unemployed" at her disposal out of which 186 divisions are first class assault troops. The losses in personnel and material were very slight in the years of 1939 and 1940 so that in spite of the previous campaigns Germany is stronger in every respect than she was in 1939.

The Fuehrer than expressed his conviction that Britain already has lost the war. It is only a matter of insight whether she wants to admit this. Consequently this will then result in the collapse of the people and of the regime which is responsible for the insane policy of Britain.

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In her present critical situation Britain is clinging to any blade of straw. She especially relies on two hopes:

First, for American help. Germany has figured on this help from the beginning. It will, however, assume more palpable proportion only in the year of 1942, but even then the extent of this help would be in no proportion to Germany's increased productivity:

Britain's second hope is Russia. The British Empire as well as the United States of America hoped that they would succeed, in spite of everything, in getting Russia on Britain's side. They expected to reach this goal if not this year then perhaps next year in order to bring about a new balance of power in Europe.

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On this it should be noted that Germany has made the known treaties with Russia, but still more important than this is the fact that Germany has 160 to 180 divisions at her disposal in case of emergency, for her protection against Russia. In case of this eventuality she (Germany) has therefore not the slightest fear and would not hesitate for a second to draw the consequences at once in case of danger. He (the Fuehrer) however does not think that this danger will occur.

About the objectives of the German warfare in Europe the Fuehrer said that the British hegemony, under all circumstances, would be broken, the British influence in Europe eliminated and every attempt at American interference in Europe would be excluded. Furthermore, the new order of the European continent would as the most essential element, establish the limitation of the rights and duties of those who lived on the continent, and would exclude all the countries which only wanted to interfere from the outside, that is especially Britain and America.

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of Orig.)

In the present struggle the Axis powers were spiritually, morally and partially materially, supported by Japan. The Tripartite Pact, for instance, through the cooperation with Japan made it possible to supply German auxiliary cruisers in East Asia. Above all it caused America to hesitate to enter the war officially. On the other hand it has contributed to the Japanese partner a great deal towards her own future by means of the work and battles of Germany.

There are few situations which offer greater facilitation and a greater probability of success in the realization of the Japanese aim than the present one. Britain is completely checked, on the sea, in the air and on land. In the Mediterranean ever stronger British power is being tied up. Likewise she has to use increasingly stronger units for convoys. Often, cruisers and destroyers are not longer sufficient since these convoys would be attacked on Germany's part by battleships. For in contrast to World War I, Germany owns today on the long front from Narvik to the Spanish-French border numerous bases from which she could advance with her naval forces against Britain and her supply lines. Britain, therefore, is nailed down in Europe, the aim is the destruction of the British Empire.

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of Orig.) America has three alternatives: She can arm herself, help Britain or wage war some place else. If she would help Britain she could not arm herself. If she would neglect Britain, this country would be knocked out and America would find herself alone opposed to the powers of the Tripartite Pact. But in no case could America wage a war some place else.

(Page 11 Therefore, a better opportunity for a joint action of the Tripartite of Orig.) power than the one established today will in all human possibility never again arise. On the other hand it is clear to him that with every historical act a risk has to be taken into consideration. Rarely in history, however, has the risk been less than at present while war is being waged in Europe, Britain is tied up there, America is still at the beginning of her armament, Japan is the strongest power in the East Asia sphere and Russia could not act since there are 150 German divisions standing at her Western border. Such a moment will never occur again, it is unique in history.) No (the Fuehrer) admits that there is a certain risk involved, but it is an exceptionally small one at a time when Russia and Britain are eliminated and America is not yet prepared. If this favourable moment would pass by and the European conflict would possibly end in a compromise, France and Britain would recover in a few years. America would join them as Japan's third enemy and Japan would sooner or later be faced with the task after all of defending the security of her living space (Lebensraum) in a battle against these three nations.

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of Orig.) Militarily, too, there has not been since the memory of man a situation relatively as favourable as now, although the military difficulties resulting from action should not be underestimated.

Especially favorable is the fact that there exist no conflicts of interests between Japan and her Allies. Germany, which would satisfy her colonial demands in Africa, is just as little interested in East Asia as Japan is in Europe. This is the best basis for cooperation between a Japanese East Asia and a German-Italian Europe.

On the other hand the cooperation of the Anglo-Saxons never meant a real coalition but always only a playing off of one against the other. Just as much as Britain does not put up with the hegemony of one nation in Europe, she would in East Asia play off Japan, China and Russia against each other to promote the interests of her own empire. The United States would act just like Britain, she would inherit the empire and replace British imperialism with American imperialism.

A better situation for joint action would hardly ever again exist for a personal reason also. He (The Fuehrer) has full confidence in himself, the German nation stands unitedly back of him as with nobody else in her previous history. He has the necessary power of resolution in critical situations and, finally, Germany is experiencing a tremendous series of successes which is also unique in the world but need not be repeated.

In conclusion the Fuehrer pointed out that his attitude toward Japan did not originate in the year 1941. He has always been for cooperation with this country. Ambassador OSHIMA knows that he (the Fuehrer) has worked firmly toward this goal for many years. He is determined in the future never again to deviate from this line. As already mentioned, especially favorable for cooperation is the fact that there are no conflicts in interest between Japan and Germany. For interests in the long run are indeed stronger than personalities and the will of a Fuehrer; therefore they always endanger anew the cooperation between nations if they are turned in opposite directions. In the case of Japan and Germany, therefore, one can plan for the longest time on account of the non-existence of such conflicts. This has been his firm conviction since earliest youth. The Japanese, German, and Italian nations would be highly successful if they would draw the consequences from this present unique situation.

MATSUOKA thanked the Fuehrer for his frank statements which made the whole situation very clear to him. Although he already has occupied himself thoroughly with the arguments advanced by HITLER, he would once again consider most thoroughly the arguments mentioned.

On the whole he agrees with the views mentioned by the Fuehrer. Especially he is also of the opinion that any resolute action involves a certain risk. MATSUOKA declared with reference to the report of Ambassador OTT and the German Foreign Minister through which the Fuehrer will probably be accurately informed about the present situation in Japan, that he wants to present the situation personally and very frankly. There are in Japan, as in other countries, certain intellectual circles which can be kept in check only by a strong man. This is the type which although he would like to have the cubs of the tigress, is, however, not prepared to go into the cave to snatch them away from their mother. These trends of thought, were presented by him using

the same picture at a conference at headquarters in the presence of two princes of royal blood. It is regrettable that Japan has not yet rid herself of these circles, indeed that some of these people (Page 16 of Orig.) are even in influential positions. Confidentially, however, he can say that, after a violent discussion, he prevailed with his view at the conference at headquarters. Japan will act, and that decisively, when she has the feeling that she would otherwise lose a chance which might only return after a thousand years; and that Japan will advance regardless of the condition of her preparations, because there would always be some people who would consider the preparation insufficient. This point he, MATSUOKA, carried successfully also against both the princes. The timid politicians in Japan would always hesitate and would act partly because of a sympathetic pro-British or pro-American attitude.

MATSUOKA then pointed out that he had advocated the alliance already long before the outbreak of the European war. He greatly exerted himself at that time on behalf of its conclusion, but regrettably had had no success. After the outbreak of the European war he personally held the view that Japan first should attack Singapore and put an end to British influence in this district, and only then should conclude the Tripartite Pact, because the thought of Japan joining the alliance without simultaneously making a contribution toward knocking-out Britain was unpleasant to him. Because, while Germany has already waged a gigantic battle against Britain for a year, Japan, at the time of the conclusion of the pact, had not yet contributed anything. Therefore, he had very strongly insisted on a plan of attacking Singapore, but did not push it through and then, by force of circumstances reversed his program and put joining of the pact in first place.

He did not have the least doubt that the South Sea problem could not be solved without the capture of Singapore by Japan. One has only (Page 18 of Orig.) to intrude into the cave of the tigress and take out the cubs by force.

It is only a matter of time until Japan will attack. According to his opinion the attack should ensue as soon as possible. Unfortunately he does not govern Japan but has to convert the rulers to his opinion. He will surely also succeed in this some day. But at the present moment he cannot, under these circumstances, assume any obligation to act for his Japanese nation.

Upon his return, he would give these matters his most serious attention after his conference with the Führer and the German Foreign Minister and after having personally examined the situation in Europe. He could not promise anything definite but promises that he will personally advocate to the utmost the goals indicated.

MATSUOKA then also urgently requested the statements just presented by him to be held strictly confidential because upon their becoming known in Japan the members of the cabinet differing in opinion would (Page 19 of Orig.) probably turn pale and try to get him out of his office.

While endeavoring to bring about the pact, he had also kept strictest silence until the very last moment and frequently and purposely created the impression of a pro-American or a pro-British attitude for the deception of his adversaries.

Shortly before conclusion of the pact it was reported to him that the British Ambassador made strong propaganda among the Japanese that Japan was playing a very risky game by joining the Tripartite pact. The American Ambassador also expressed himself similarly. A few days after conclusion of the pact he asked the American Ambassador whether the reports about the propaganda were based on fact. The ambassador Page 20 admitted everything and, moreover, stated that every Japanese he had met f Orig.)since publication of the conclusion of the pact, had expressed the opinion that Germany would win the war. This, according to the opinion of the American Ambassador, is untrue, Germany has no chance to win the war and therefore it would be in his (the American Ambassador's) opinion actually a very risky game for Japan if she had concluded the pact perhaps with the assumption of a German victory.

MATSUOKA declared further that he had thereupon replied to the American Ambassador that only God knows who would win the war in the long run. But he (MATSUOKA) did not conclude the pact on the basis of the victory of this or that power, but based on his vision of the new order. He had listened with interest to the statements of the Fuehrer about the Page 21 new order and was fully and entirely convinced by them. If he would f Orig.)for once, assume purely hypothetically, that the fortunes of war would turn at a given moment against Germany, he must state to the American Ambassador that Japan would then immediately come to the assistance of her ally.

His visions of the new order were laid down by him in the preamble of the Tripartite Pact. That is an ideal which has been transmitted from one generation to another since time immemorial. For him, personally, the realization of this ideal is his life objective to which he has devoted all his labor up to now, in order to make a small contribution on his part toward its realization. This Tripartite Pact, Berlin-Rom-Tokyo, is also a contribution toward this realization. The execution of these trends of thought, MATSUOKA emphasized further, stands moreover with the motto: "No conquest, no oppression, no exploitation." This was not yet understood everywhere in Japan. However, if Japan Page 22 should ever deviate from this line, he (MATSUOKA) would be the first to f Orig.)fight against it.

In this connection MATSUOKA also reminded of the other principle of the preamble to the Tripartite Pact according to which every nation was to take the place due it. Although Japan, too, will proceed by force, if necessary, in establishing the new order, and although she sometimes would have to lead with a strong hand the nations affected by this new order, she nevertheless keeps the previously quoted motto constantly before her eyes: "No conquest, no oppression, no exploitation."

During the further course of the conversation MATSUOKA came to speak about his discussions with Stalin in Moscow. As an ally he owes an explanation about it to the German Foreign Minister and would have given it at the morning conference if the German Foreign Minister had not been called away prematurely. Now he intends to give this information to the leader.

Page 23 First of all he intended to pay a complimentary visit to Molotov on his trip through Moscow. After some reflection however, he decided to ask the Japanese ambassador to find out in a mild way from the Soviet government whether there exists any interest in a conference between Stalin and him. However, before the Japanese ambassador could follow his instructions with the Soviet government, the proposal was made by the Russian government itself for a meeting between Stalin, Molotov, and Matsuka. He spoke with Molotov for about 30 minutes, Stalin for one hour, so that due to the necessary translations he spoke perhaps 10 minutes with Molotov and 25 minutes with Stalin.

He had explained to Stalin that the Japanese are morally communists. This ideal had been passed on from the fathers to the sons since time immemorial. But at the same time he stated that he does not believe in political and economic communism and rather assumed that his Japanese ancestors had already early given up every attempt in this direction and had devoted themselves to moral communism.

For that which he called moral communism, MATSUOKA then quoted some examples from his own family. This Japanese ideal of moral communism had been overthrown by the liberalism, individualism and egoism introduced from the West. At present the situation in Japan in this respect is extremely confused. However, there is a minority which is strong enough to fight successfully for the resurrection of the "old ego" of the Japanese. This ideological struggle in Japan is extremely bitter. But those who fight for the restoration of the old ideal are convinced of their final victory.

Page 25 The Anglo-Saxons are basically responsible for the penetration of the above-mentioned prevailing ideology; and for the restoration of the old traditional Japanese ideal Japan is compelled, therefore, to fight against the Anglo-Saxons just as well as in China she is fighting not against the Chinese but only against Great-Britain in China and capitalism in China.

MATSUOKA stated further that he had explained to Stalin his ideas about the new order and thereby emphasized that the Anglo-Saxons constitute the greatest obstacle to the establishment of this order and Japan, therefore, of necessity has to fight against them. He explained to Stalin that the Soviets also on their part are advocating something new and that he believes to be able to settle the difficulties between Japan and Russia after the collapse of the British empire. He pictured the Anglo-Saxons as Japan's, Germany's and Soviet Russia's common enemy.

Page 26 Stalin held out the prospect of an answer when he would travel
(Orig.) through Moscow on his return to Japan, but immediately added after
some deliberation that Soviet Russia never was friendly with Britain,
nor ever will be.

MATSUOKA, in the further course of the conversation, made some
remarks about the nature of the TENNO. The TENNO is the state, and
the life as well as property of each Japanese belongs to the TENNO,
that is the state. This is so to speak the Japanese version of a
totalitarian state structure.

In conclusion MATSUOKA spoke admiringly about the way in which
the Fuehrer is leading the German nation, which stands behind him
in complete unity, with determination and power through this great
time of revolution unequalled in history. Each nation has such a
Page 27 leader but once in a thousand years. The Japanese nation has not
(Orig.) yet found its Fuehrer. But he would surely appear in the hour of
need and take over the leadership of the nation with determination.

Berlin, 1 April 1941

signed: SCHMIDT
Ambassador

3 May 1946

I, WANDA S. TIESZEN, Civ., X 046265, hereby certify that
I am thoroughly conversant with the English and German
languages; and that the above is a true and correct
translation of Document 1878-PS.

WANDA S. TIESZEN
Civ., X 046265